



THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY'S INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MAGAZINE

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The DON Electromagnetic Spectrum Campaign

By Thomas Kidd - July-September 2007

The Navy and Marine Corps' role in the global war on terror requires the rapid development of new capabilities to defeat emerging threats from the enemy, and many of these capabilities make use of the electromagnetic spectrum (radio frequencies). Unmanned aerial systems, unmanned ground robotics and radio frequency jammers are samples of enhanced spectrum-dependent tools being used by deployed naval forces. As such, the Department of the Navy (DON) continues to increase its reliance on the use and access to spectrum. Today, spectrum is as important to Navy and Marine Corps forces as their weapons and communications.

Acknowledging the impact electromagnetic spectrum has on Navy and Marine Corps capabilities, the DON issued the first Electromagnetic Spectrum Campaign Plan. The plan establishes departmental goals and supporting objectives representing a holistic approach to maintain access to spectrum and ensures the DON makes efficient and effective use of this finite critical resource.

The campaign plan, available for download at www.doncio.navy.mil, identifies and addresses five broad, overarching goals holistically encompassing the management and use of spectrum. These goals represent the DON's efforts in the spectrum arena for the next year. The following areas are addressed.

Technology and Transformation: Over the past three decades, technology has evolved at a feverish pace and the DON's use of spectrum to support wireless capabilities has escalated proportionally. Today, technology provides the ability to receive e-mail on portable, handheld devices; make cellular telephone calls from anyplace on Earth; track and forecast the paths of hurricanes and tropical storms with great accuracy; and a vast number of other capabilities that are all enabled by the electromagnetic spectrum.

As technology continues to advance and the demand for spectrum increases, the DON must manage and use spectrum as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Federal, National, and International Spectrum Policies: Much of the Navy's and Marine Corps' use of spectrum is reliant upon host nations allowing U.S. forces to use spectrum for their missions. International spectrum policy changes can have a dramatic impact on the Navy and Marine Corps' capabilities. The Department recognizes this importance and strives to advocate policies that support the global efforts of the naval services.

National and federal spectrum policies also impact Navy and Marine Corps training within the United States and its possessions, and similar to the Department's international advocacy, the Department supports national and federal spectrum policy that provides realistic, unrestricted training opportunities.

Spectrum-Related Administrative Actions: Federal administrative actions ensure the efficient use of spectrum. Administrative actions within the Department of Defense spectrum community include coordination of system characteristics to support the assignment of frequencies to Navy and Marine Corps forces. These actions are essential to sustained, interference-free use of spectrum critical to warfighters.

The DON's timely and accurate spectrum-related administrative actions identify the Navy and Marine Corps as good stewards of a host nation's spectrum resources.

Department and Service Spectrum Publications, Directives and Policy: A number of publications, directives and policies from the Department and its naval services address, in whole or in part, spectrum. The rapid acceleration of technology can result in policy and governance lagging behind the systems they affect. As such, the spectrum publications, directives and policies within the DON must be regularly reviewed to ensure that they adequately and accurately address spectrum processes and departmental responsibilities.

The benefits of up-to-date publications include coordinated actions throughout the Department that provide spectrum when and where it is required by naval warfighters.

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Personnel Training and Spectrum Tools: The most important asset of the DON is its personnel. They must receive the very best, most realistic spectrum training possible and have access to the best automated spectrum tools to remain the world's finest fighting naval service in the world.

In addressing these five areas the Department is devoting significant resources to ensure efficient management and effective use of spectrum. Spectrum enables a multitude of capabilities within the naval services, many of which are critical to mission success and safety. Therefore, spectrum requirements are addressed in acquisition, operational planning, command and control, and all other DON functional areas relying on wireless, real-time, spectrum-enabled capabilities.

The Department's operational community, program managers, installation personnel and other spectrum stakeholders must consider during the planning stages, how spectrum-reliant systems will be supported.

Tom Kidd is the director for DON Strategic Spectrum Policy for the [Department of the Navy Chief Information Officer](#).

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